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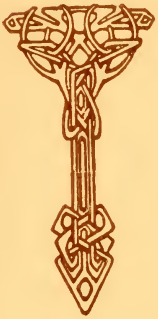
Mt. Tamalpais
the Sublime



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BY
EVELYN M. MEYER

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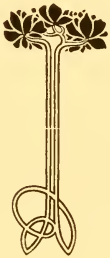
Mt. Tamalpais *the* Sublime

Being a Little Book
About a Great Subject



By
EVELYN M. MEYER
Portland, Oregon

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MT. TAMALPAIS! What magic in the name to those who have reveled in its ever-changing beauty! It's like the Genii of the lamp of Aladdin, that conjures wonderful visions! What a world of wonder dreams it holds out to the uninitiated!

Twenty-six hundred feet above the sea level, it stands, a sentinel outdistancing all the near peaks, surveying the surrounding scenes with an imperturbable calmness that rivals the Sphinx.

We reach this wonderful point of observation by the crookedest railway in the world. So steep and forbidding are its precipitous sides that winding round about the side of the mountain for a distance of eight and one-fifth miles we make an ascent of only twenty-four hundred feet to the tavern.

This railway was the realized dream of Mr. Thompson, of Chicago, who has given the present generation and bequeathed to posterity the most sumptuous view points in the world. Various legends as to the origin of its name cling to the place. Pais, the Spanish word for land—Tamal—the name of a tribe of Indians

who roamed the vast mountain sides, form a logical origin for Tamalpais—the land of the Tamals.

A more amusing tale is that of the Mexican Grandee, who in days of old owned all the vast acres, near and far. He was famed for a keen fondness for the great Mexican delicacy, a tamale, and also for a far-reaching hospitality where the principal and most famous part of his hospitality consisted of a lavish dispensing of his favorite tid-bit, so it was called by some tamale-land—easily convertible to Tamalpais. Choose which you will. See in imagination the great hordes of gayly blanketed Indians, wandering about, or the more epicurean Mexican Grandee dispensing hospitality. One fact remains indisputable—here is unrivaled and unsurpassed beauty!

Leaving San Francisco by boat and sailing on the blue and gold waters, we reach Sausalito and take the train for Mill Valley, which seems like a toy village nestled in the deep valley surrounded by towering peaks. Impatiently we await the steam car which carries us on our circuitous travels; passing through

the moist forests of the far-famed redwood, and if in early summer the beauty is enhanced by the riot of color on the hill sides, California heather, mountain lupine, manzanita, the laurel and madrona trees, all vie with one another, painting the hillside with yellows and blues, too vivid for description.

Traveling along altogether too rapidly, making grades almost perpendicular, and turns so sharp that engine and coach seem side by side, we journey upward. Finally the fascinating double bowknot is reached—the most interest-

ing bit of double backing that can be imagined. Looking down from the peak we can almost imagine a huge bow-knot of ribbon on the green-brown dress of some antediluvian giantess. Here the less impatient travelers leave us to go through Muir woods, a wonderful grove of redwood trees of gigantic size and wonderful color, donated to the people of California by their patron saint of out-of-doors, John Muir.

When we reach Panoramic View—we think we have seen the wonder of the Gods revealed, but greater visions await us. Reaching the tavern our band of tourists, more impatient for the feast of nature's beauty, than mere table banquet, walk up to Observation Tower. We stand speechless before a view that seems to encompass the entire state. On clear days one sees two hundred miles distant.

The City Hall in Oakland, the Golden Gate, Cliff House, San Rafael, even the far-distant Farallone Islands, all are seen with as much ease as the nearby trees and shrubs.

Gazing upon this beauty of sea and mountain, deep blue and golden brown seen no-

where in such wonderful contrast and richness, one seems almost overwhelmed with a beauty so prodigal in color. Wandering around the peak, and finding a comfortable ledge near the impassive old Roman Gladiator we close our eyes and let the beauty of pure clear air and golden sunshine filter through and through our beings. Lulled by the gentle sweetness of summer zephyrs, soft as the inner petal of a rose, we unconsciously drift to the hazy land of dreams where rich wondrous colors and fantastical shapes try to rival the real beauties of this fairy scene. But beware, while glorying in the perfect satisfaction of sense and soul, you have not the experience of a friend of mine who, with closed eyes and relaxed body, fell fast asleep and was awakened by something pulling on her hat which lay in her lap —she awakened suddenly to see a little mountain goat banqueting on the daisies of her summer hat.

Good seeker of life's beauties tarry here long enough to joy in the twilight time, when all nature is hushed and attuned to perfect harmony—the call of the California quail, the

crickets of good cheer and the vesper twitterings of numberless mother birds singing the wee ones to rest.

The night winds will call to you and the low sinking sun sends his last beams, from his hiding place in the restless waves of the Pacific, to tell you of a tomorrow. The deep folds of the mountain are violet and lavender filled, the western sky is gold and crimson and the little fleecy clouds are yellow and gold and silver lined.

In all this peace it is hard to think that far away cities are filled with the restless searchers for just the peace we feel. Perhaps a kind fate has sent you here when the new moon rises above the Pacific, a slender bow, like a thread of silver with a frail reflection of misty light in the waves.

Soon the little lights appear in the bay cities and San Francisco, like a vast field of white daisies. Mill Valley, far below us, seems with its deep woodsy background and dainty twinkling lights a huge illuminated Christmas tree. An occasional steamer plies its way through the outstretched arms of the Golden

Gate. Its outlines are shadowy and ghostlike and the little lights of the ship seem like lost stars fallen from the sky. The long ever-moving shafts of light that reach out from the near lighthouses on the bay island and the far away Farallone Islands seem like protective hands reaching to guide the incoming boats.

Night claims it all! Ridges and precipices grow indistinct. The lights grow more intensive, the stars more piercing and scintillating. Night winds tell you that a greater glory awaits you with the rising sun.

Rich is the compensation to the early riser here! Look to the east and see the sun in his golden chariot rise from behind the foothills. How faint the reflected light, then richer and fuller he pours his life-giving light, touching each point and ridge with gold—the bay, Mill Valley—the far distant reservoirs —the near ridges, the very place we stand! All flooded with light. The ocean is a sea of molten gold—the hills are opalescent mirrors of reflected light—the trees are aflame—we feel in a small way, yet in a great way, for it's the greatest we are capable of feeling—

the same supreme joy the Diety felt when He said: "Let there be light and there was light."

"Day!
Faster and more fast
O'er night's brim, day boils at last:
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world."

We are loth to leave it all, the many wonderful view points, its varicolored mountains, the steep declivities, the redwood grove, famous for picnics and haunts of book-loving souls—the dozen and one enticing paths that beckon us hither and yon over the mountain sides.

We succumb to temptation, we tarry another night to see it all again. Never was the path of the transgressor more beautiful, for Mother Nature in her wisdom well knows the same visions should not be repeated, so from old Neptune's faraway home pours in a rolling, rollicking fog.

Every depression on the mountain-side is filled with legion upon legion of fathomless fog clouds. The entire tavern and far-reaching landscape is a vast encampment of shadowy soldiery. It is as if one stood on the shore of a fathomless far-reaching, never-ending sea of mist that encompasses and encircles the entire globe. When fair Luna shines far in the starry heavens trying to pierce the fast accumulating billows of fog, it changes it all to a sea of irridescent silver.

The hour arrives for the departure of the gravity car, we all board it and leave the companionable twinkling lights of the tavern and plunge deep into the fog waves. We take a leap into the unknown but the little car sped swiftly on its journey through fog-land and we had soon left all the beauty behind and were again human beings in a very human world—not gods and goddesses wandering through Elysium.

Evelyn M. Meyer

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